



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Chair, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 7302 (Clyburn) – As Introduced June 24, 2020 - SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Norton:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support H.R. 7302, which would invest in building high-speed broadband infrastructure in underserved as well as unserved communities, and invest in broadband adoption programs.

Across the county, the digital divide is prevalent across major demographic groups and in rural areas. In California, as noted by PPIC study, most demographic groups have seen significant increases in broadband subscriptions at home, however gaps persist for low-income, less educated, rural, African American, and Latino households. In California, 12% of households have no access to the internet and another 10% only have access with a mobile phone. While mobile phones are useful, they are inadequate for long distance learning and work-from-home. Since 2013, growing shares of Californians use the internet for email, financial services, and job searches. The internet is also an important access point for health care, especially in rural areas facing shortages of physicians and mental health providers.

Residents without internet service are at a great disadvantage, and experience a significant gap in access to information, healthcare options, education and job opportunities. The economic and social benefits of expanding internet service to underserved areas are incalculable. As communities around the world adapt to a world with COVID-19, broadband connectivity and access are more critical to our lives and livelihoods than ever before. All learning, services, commerce, most workplaces and daily interactions online require a high-speed connection to the internet. Needless to say COVID-19 has only intensified the problem across demographic group and rural areas. This legislation can assist to mitigate the growing gap to high-speed broadband access and affordability.

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For the reasons listed above, the County support H.R. 7302. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please contact Josh Candelaria, Governmental and Legislative Director, at 909 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,



Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chair, Board of Supervisors



Dawn Rowe
Third District Supervisor
Board of Supervisors

cc: San Bernardino County Federal Legislative Delegation